United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to present proposal envisaging federal structure for Republic, with regions not exclusively based on ethnicity, to Special Representative Stoltenberg; suggests that Secretary-General ask "friends" to aid peace process.

+ Croatian and Serbian representatives agree to adjourn Vienna cease-fire negotiations for further consultations; substantial progress achieved, but some matters still to be resolved.

+ Executive Chairman of Special Commission says team will leave for Iraq tomorrow to install monitoring cameras at two rocket test sites; high-level technical talks to begin in New York as soon as possible.

+ Secretary-General urges parties to conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh to end hostilities and to support work of CSCE's Minsk Group for cease-fire and political solution.

+ UNITA, in report to Special Representative for Angola, accepts responsibility for 15 July attack on WFP aircraft; says it will try to prevent recurrence of "unfortunate accident" and will cooperate with United Nations humanitarian efforts.

+ Secretary-General expresses readiness to continue support for Guatemalan peace negotiations within framework agreeable to parties; United Nations has participated in process since 1990.

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The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina will soon forward to Special Representative Thorvald Stoltenberg a proposal for negotiations on the Republic's future envisaging a federal structure comprising several regions not exclusively based on ethnic principles. In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 20 July, the Presidency commended Mr. Stoltenberg for his efforts in seeking an equitable peace for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(more)

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The letter recalled that the concept of "friends of the Secretary-General" had proved extremely useful in negotiations for a peace agreement in El Salvador and a return to democracy in Haiti. It went on to suggest that the Secretary-General ask a group of countries to support Special Representative Stoltenberg's efforts to bring peace to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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After three days of negotiations on a cease-fire agreement, senior Croatian and Serbian representatives have agreed to adjourn their meeting in Vienna in order to undertake urgent consultations with their respective authorities, according to a United Nations spokesman. He said substantial progress had been made, although some matters remained to be resolved, and it was expected that the meeting would reconvene as soon as possible.

The negotiations were held under the auspices of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and chaired by the Chief Military Observer, Brigadier-General Bo Pellnas.

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Rolf Ekeus, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq, has said a technical team will leave for Iraq tomorrow to install monitoring cameras at two rocket test sites there. Mr. Ekeus told correspondents that during his recent visit to Baghdad, Iraq had agreed to permit the installation of the cameras on an interim basis and to hold high-level technical talks with the Commission in New York as soon as possible.

The forthcoming talks would deal with the nature and implementation of ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's capabilities, including the long-term solution to the question of the cameras, and other outstanding issues, according to Mr. Ekeus. Meanwhile, the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq had given explicit assurances that the Commission would be forewarned of any test firings so that it could observe them.

Mr. Ekeus stressed that the Commission was still suspicious of Iraq's intentions, although the recent discussions in Baghdad had been constructive. "It's only a first step, but we feel at least a process can start," he said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed deep concern over reports of renewed conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. In a statement issued today, he urged all parties to exercise restraint, to end hostilities and to fully support the Minsk Group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which was trying to develop plans for a cease-fire and a political solution to the outstanding problems.

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The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) has accepted full responsibility for an incident on 15 July in which a World Food Programme (WFP) aircraft was hit by several bullets as it was preparing to land at M'Banza Congo. In an explanatory report to the Secretary-General's Special Representative Alioune Blondin Beye, UNITA said that the "unfortunate accident" had resulted from a failure of communications, and undertook to do everything possible to prevent a recurrence.

UNITA had also reiterated its commitment to cooperate with the United Nations in the provision of humanitarian assistance throughout Angola, according to a United Nations spokesman. He said that there were no immediate plans for the resumption of humanitarian flights, which had been suspended after the incident, but added that he hoped to have an announcement on that issue very soon.

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The United Nations has been participating in the Guatemalan peace process since 1990 in response to requests made by the parties to the conflict and set out in the Oslo Agreement of March 1990 and the Mexico Agreement of April 1991, according to a United Nations spokesman. He said Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was ready to continue his support for the negotiation process within a framework agreeable to the parties.

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